



5 January 2005

A Message From The Commander

Holiday Greetings to the families and friends of our service members deployed to the Horn of Africa! We celebrate the onset of a New Year, and we press on with our goals of providing assistance to the peoples of Eastern Africa and contributing to the suppression of worldwide terrorism. 2004 was a remarkable year here at Camp Lemonier. We were blessed with a constant influx of high caliber people who came here and served with distinction. These were your loved ones, your family members, your friends. We overcame great challenges and accomplished special things. The quality of the character of the men and women who served here flourished. We came together as a true team, not a collection of individuals but rather talented and dedicated people rising together and coming together and doing what had to be done together. We made giant strides in 2004, and I know we will do even better this year. I am indebted to your sacrifices, and I understand how tough it is for your loved ones to be thousands of miles away during a time of the year in which American families traditionally come together. Know that your sacrifice is not in vain. Your deployed service member is making the world a better and safer place. They are the real heroes.

For Christmas and New Years Day, we organized special events aboard Camp Lemonier. Most important was the our Safety Standown, in which we took an operational pause, brought the troops in from the field, sat down together as a family and broke bread, and stressed the importance of working smartly while working hard. The most precious resource we have in this fight against tyranny is the man and woman who wear the uniform and their support network from back home. It goes without saying that their safety is paramount, and while we are here to do the right thing we will ensure we do that right thing correctly and safely, meaning getting the job done and getting our people home. We also held special religious services, and in conjunction with getting people some time off from their rigorous schedule we were able to generate time for reflection and time to communicate to you back home. While walking around the Camp and talking to our troops I noted how full our lines were to use the phones and computers for email home. It reminded me of how critical the role you play is in America's fight on terrorism. We served special holiday meals in our dining facility. The support provided to us by the civilian contractors is beyond reproach. Time and again they have delivered to feed us and to house us. To KBR and their families, I also say thanks and best holiday wishes.

Let's continue with our momentum, and let's build upon our strong foundation as we cross into this New Year. The goal is to provide for a safer tomorrow, a world in which our children can live without the threat of terrorism looming above. If we complete this tough job today our children will not have to take it upon themselves to tackle it tomorrow. If we band together and maintain faith and integrity we can see this through to completion. God bless, and have an enjoyable and safe holiday season.

Take Care,

SAMUEL T. HELLAND

Major General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commander, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa

